Oswald exhumation called publicity hunt

By GARY SHULTZ
Staff Writer

Those who came in contact with Lee Harvey Oswald in the days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy said Thursday they believe the man buried in Fort Worth's Rose Hill Cemetery is who he claimed to be.

The proposed exhumation of the body, they said, is nothing more than a publicity stunt by a British author who wants to sell his books.

The writer, Michael Eddowes, argues in his book that the person buried in the cemetery is really a Soviet agent disguised to look like Oswald.

"I think that's a bunch of b.s. I don't know why they don't leave it alone, let it die," said Sheriff's Deputy Walter Potts, who executed the search warrant at Oswald's apartment.

"Sure it was him," Potts said. "He's the same guy that got shot in the city hall basement, Marina's husband. There's no doubt in my mind that the guy killed in the basement and buried in Fort Worth was Lee Harvey Oswald."

Dallas Police Sgt. Gus Rose, who helped interrogate Oswald after his arrest, holds the same opinion as Potts.

"I think this is only a publicity hunt," Rose said. "When he was handcuffed and brought in, we fingerprinted him. Yes, we checked the fingerprints against those on his military records. There's no question that he was Lee Oswald . . .

"If you're going to sell a book, it's got to be controversial. No one's going to read a retelling of the same old story. That's why they're trying to stir up this controversy."

Dallas attorney Bill Alexander, who was chief assistant district attorney in 1963, said that throughout his investigation, he never doubted Oswald was anyone other than who he claimed to be.

Alexander said Oswald's family "thought it was him. If he was an imposter, the switch would have had to have been made in Russia, before he came back, and his wife would have had to have been in on it. If it turns out not to be Lee Harvey Oswald, someone had better jerk a knot in her tail, because she knows a lot more than she's been telling.

"The speculation on this whole thing runs the spectrum of fantasy. There's another 'what if' to all of this. What if they dig down through the grass and find someone's drilled a hole in that cheap casket and pumped acid in there to destroy the evidence. That rumor's also been making the rounds."

Equally skeptical that a Russian spy lies buried in Rose Hill are former Justice of the Peace David Johnson, who arraigned Oswald, and former Justice of the Peace Pierce McBride, who ordered his autopsy and ruled his death a murder.

Johnson said he saw Oswald three different times and the accused assassin never gave the peace justice any reason to doubt his identity.